

# **Excellence in Safeguarding**

## Level 3 Training

Resource guide for  
delegates



## BUGB Safeguarding materials and resources for churches

Help is available for churches who want to implement or update robust safeguarding policies and procedures. Listed below are some of the core materials available free of charge for use by churches and church leaders.

All are available in the Safeguarding section of our website: [www.baptist.org.uk/safeguarding](http://www.baptist.org.uk/safeguarding)

### Model Safeguarding Policy

Our model safeguarding policy has been put together by the Baptist Union of Great Britain to offer a template and a set of helpful guidance notes for churches as they develop or review the safeguarding framework for their church. It contains four sections:

- **Safeguarding Policy Statement** – this is a template policy that you can use as a starting point for your own church’s policy
- **Safeguarding Procedures** – these sections provide a clear outline of the reporting procedures needed in every local Baptist church
- **Best Practice Guidelines** – these guidelines provide detailed information on key areas of safeguarding in the life of a Baptist church
- **Useful Contacts** – contacts for organisations and charities who can provide additional support



The Model Safeguarding Policy and Procedures is available for download in WORD or PDF format using the following link:

[https://www.baptist.org.uk/Articles/509643/Model\\_Safeguarding\\_Policy.aspx](https://www.baptist.org.uk/Articles/509643/Model_Safeguarding_Policy.aspx)

### Safeguarding topic-based guides



A series of informative guides are available that provide more detailed information for those who hold safeguarding responsibilities in their churches.

These are good starting points for learning and discussion in your church.

Currently, nine different guides are available and can be downloaded as PDF documents from our website.

- BUGB Guide to Cyber-Safety
- BUGB Guide to Safeguarding Record Keeping
- BUGB Guide to Understanding Domestic Abuse
- BUGB Guide to Understanding Self Harm
- BUGB Guide to Using Social Media
- DBS Checks
- Safeguarding Contracts: Frequently Asked Questions
- Supporting Those Who Have Experienced Abuse
- The Role of the Designated Person for Safeguarding

## Safeguarding Audit Tool for Churches

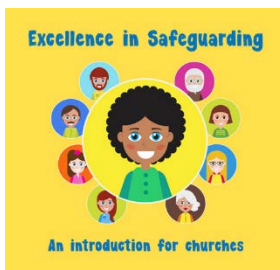


Is it the right time to do a detailed review of safeguarding practices in your church?

Our safeguarding audit tool provides a framework for churches to look at their existing policies and practices, and to look for opportunities to develop further.

This is a great way to check compliance with safeguarding legislation, guidance and best practice

## Level 1 Excellence in Safeguarding film for churches



**Level 1 Excellence in Safeguarding – all age services** is a short, 8 minute film designed for use in all age services or events.

To complement this film there is a set of materials for sessions with children and young people based around the parable of the Good Samaritan. This material involves a variety of age appropriate activities for children in school years Reception to 9 which help to get the message of safeguarding across to the children and young people of the church.

A second shorter version of this film designed for use in church members meetings is also available. Churches may choose to use this as part of their annual review of safeguarding policy.

## Gateway to Level 2 Excellence in Safeguarding

This guide will help volunteers who want to work with children, young people or adults at risk in your church to understand the basics of safeguarding in a church context before they attend the Baptist Union of Great Britain Level 2 Excellence in Safeguarding training.

This guide is not intended to be a replacement for Level 2 Excellence in Safeguarding training but is a useful tool for the Designated Person for Safeguarding to use with new volunteers as a precursor to Level 2 training.



## Safeguarding Roles and Responsibilities

Each church needs to identify and fill several important posts that underpin effective safeguarding in the church. These notes outline the main responsibilities relating to safeguarding connected with key leadership roles.

### **Trustees / Deacons**

- Ultimately responsible for safeguarding
- Responsible for the implementation of policy and procedures
- Responsible for supporting the church workers
- Responsible for raising awareness about best practice within the church
- Responsible for ensuring that the relevant people have received the appropriate training

### **Safeguarding Trustee / Deacon**

Not necessarily the person who heads up safeguarding in the church – could be a trustee / deacon with an interest and willingness to learn.

- Takes a lead on safeguarding matters for the trustees / deacons
- Is the point of contact with trustees / deacons for safeguarding issues
- Ensures church policy and procedures are reviewed annually

### **Designated Person for Safeguarding**

- Receives all reports of concerns regarding the safeguarding of children, young people and adults at risk
- Listens, observes, and passes on those concerns appropriately, having taken advice from the relevant people
- Acts as a link between the church and other agencies or bodies on safeguarding matters

### **Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Verifier**

- Responsible for all aspects of processing DBS checks for church staff and volunteers (with the exception of the accredited minister who is checked by the regional association)

### **The Minister**

- Shares with the trustees the general responsibility for the adoption and implementation of the church's safeguarding policy
- Takes responsibility for ensuring that the pastoral needs of all are being met
- May need to be made aware of safeguarding issues in line with the guidance on page 6

## Referrals to Statutory Agencies: Guidance and Examples

| Statutory Authority  | When to refer  | Case Examples  |
|----------------------|--|--|
| <p><b>Police</b></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When you believe a crime has been committed.</li> <li>• When you believe that someone may be in immediate danger.</li> <li>• When you are concerned that someone may be at risk of committing a crime or being the victim of a crime due to an on-going or escalating pattern of behaviour.</li> <li>• When you believe that someone poses a risk to themselves or others.</li> <li>• When you believe a hate crime or hate incident has occurred.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A young person tells you that they were assaulted on the street.</li> <li>• You suspect that someone has been taking money out of the of the collection.</li> <li>• A woman shows you bruising and says that her husband assaulted her.</li> <li>• You notice that a member of the congregation has deteriorating mental health. They have left the building in a distressed state making suicidal threats. You know they have had previous suicidal attempts.</li> <li>• A child discloses physical or sexual abuse within the home, and you consider there to be an imminent risk of harm.</li> <li>• When someone has been the subject of a potential hate crime incident or hate crime in relation to their sexuality or gender identity (LGBT+ community), ethnicity or disability.</li> </ul> |

## Referrals to Statutory Agencies: Guidance and Examples

| Statutory Authority               | When to refer   | Case Examples   |
|-----------------------------------|---|---|
| <p><b>Children’s Services</b></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When you are concerned that a child or young person under 18* has been subject to abuse – physical, emotional, sexual or neglect within the home.</li> <li>• When a child or young person has disclosed that they have been harmed in the above way within the home.</li> <li>• When there is a disclosure or concern about domestic abuse being perpetrated within a family where there are children and young people under the age of 18 (they do not need to be present at the time of the abuse).</li> <li>• When there are concerns about a child or young person under the 18 within the wider community – involvement in gang activity, substance use, at risk of sexual exploitation.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You have noticed the deteriorating presentation of 2 children who attend Sunday school and you are concerned about neglect.</li> <li>• A member of the youth group has become increasingly withdrawn and you notice that they have some cuts on their arms. The parents are asking for support and help**.</li> <li>• A member of the church has been supporting a lady in the church who has disclosed that there is an on-going abusive relationship with her ex-partner and her children are having regular contact with him which is unsupervised.</li> <li>• A child within the Sunday School is anxious and tearful – they have told you that they are worried about their 13-year-old sister – she keeps staying away from home and has new group of friends who are older than her. They say their mum doesn’t know what to do.</li> </ul> |

\*Or under the age of 25 if the child has special educational needs, disability or is a ‘Looked After’ child/Child in Care.

\*\*In this situation, it may be that children’s social care will redirect you to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) or the child’s GP.

## Referrals to Statutory Agencies: Guidance and Examples

| Statutory Authority          | When to refer  | Case Examples   |
|------------------------------|--|---|
| <p><b>Adult Services</b></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When you have concern that an adult at risk may be subject to abuse – physical, emotional, sexual, neglect, financial etc.</li> <li>• When you have concerns that an adult at risk may be struggling to meet their own needs and therefore at increased risk of harm.</li> <li>• When there are concerns that an adult is a significant risk of harm to themselves or others due to deterioration in mental health or capability*.</li> <li>• Where another adult or adults have moved into the property of an adult at risk (this is sometimes called ‘cuckooing’).</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You notice that one of the older members in the congregation is increasingly unkempt, appears to be very confused and at times distressed.</li> <li>• An adult with learning difficulties tells you that one of their carers keeps asking to borrow money from them and they can’t afford to buy their food.</li> <li>• An adult with long standing mental health needs has attended church under the influence of alcohol for the past 2 weeks.</li> <li>• An adult with complex needs is about to be made homeless by their landlord because they haven’t been looking after their property.</li> <li>• You believe that one of the older members of the church may be subject to emotional and physical abuse from their grandson.</li> </ul> |

\*Churches are unlikely to be able to make direct referrals to community mental health services. This service can be accessed through the individual’s GP.



## Referrals to Statutory Agencies: Guidance and Examples

| Statutory Authority | When to refer  | Case Examples   |
|---------------------|--|---|
| <p><b>LADO</b></p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When there are concerns about the ‘suitability’ of a member of the leadership or those working directly with children and young people or adults at risk within the church, which poses a risk to those under 18.</li> <li>• When an allegation or disclosure is made about an adult in a position of trust in the wider community relating to their behaviour towards children and young people, either within the church or externally.</li> <li>• When there is a possibility of transferrable risk from an allegation of harm (child abuse, domestic abuse) to the church, relating to someone in a position of trust or leadership within the church.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The son of a teacher in the local school has told the youth leader at the church that his dad has hit him in the past when he has been cross.</li> <li>• One of the Deacons has grabbed one of the children in church by the arm and shook them because they weren’t listening in Sunday School.</li> <li>• There has been an incident at home where the youth worker has assaulted their wife. The police were called but the wife did not want to press charges. They don’t have any children.</li> <li>• There are rumours that one of the volunteer youth leaders is in a relationship with a 16-year-old in the youth group. They have been seen holding hands in town.</li> <li>• A volunteer with the creche left the gate open from the playground to the road and a 3-year-old left the site. His absence was noticed after a couple of minutes, he was found and brought back safe and sound.</li> <li>• Where a children’s leader repeatedly loses their temper with, shouts at, or belittles, the children in their care.</li> </ul> |

If you are unsure who to refer to then contact your Association Safeguarding Contact for advice. If you believe that in waiting for a response from the Association Safeguarding Contact could increase the risk of harm posed by the situation then this is an indication that it is most likely appropriate to contact the police for advice.

## Communicating with the wider church about a safeguarding situation - guidance for the Designated Person for Safeguarding and church leadership teams

### Who in the church should know about a safeguarding concern?

- When those with safeguarding responsibility become aware of a safeguarding concern, whether related directly to church life or to people connected with the church, then the primary concern is for the safety and well-being of those involved.
- All information relating to these concerns should be managed with confidentiality in mind, with **only those who need to know** having the information. **In most situations this is the safeguarding team alone.**
- There may be occasions when, to meet the pastoral needs of those involved, the Minister may need to be aware of the details of concerns, but this will not always be the case. For example:
  - the minister may need to be aware of a referral to statutory agencies if they are already supporting the family through other difficulties.
  - when there is likely to be prolonged police or court proceedings which could lead to pastoral support needs for those involved.
  - where an allegation is made against a member of staff or volunteers relating to church activities.
  - where there are implications for the pastoral needs of people within the church.
- The primary action in any situation is to ensure that the appropriate authorities are aware within 24 hours. This should be the first course of action. The DPS should seek consent of the people involved and make the offer of pastoral support before alerting the minister. There may be occasions (for example when there is an on-going pastoral relationship or where it relates directly to church activities) when the Minister would need to be aware so as to carry out their general work within the church. If the DPS is unsure whether they need to tell the Minister then they should speak to their Association Safeguarding Lead first.
- The only time that all trustees may need to know any details of any safeguarding concern is if there is a direct link to the church and there could be some liability held by the church for the situation which has occurred. Even then, **they do not need to know all the details** and you should be careful to only provide information that is necessary for trustees to understand the level of risk. For example:
  - An allegation has been made against a staff member or volunteer which is connected to their role in church, and they need to be suspended pending an investigation.
  - An allegation has been made against a volunteer within the church which relates to their work outside the church but could have reputational implications for the church as well as safeguarding implications within the church.

- An allegation has been made against the minister and they need to be suspended pending an investigation.

There is never an occasion where church members or attendees need to know all the details of any safeguarding situation. ***Only the people who need to know, need to know!***

## How do we deal with situations where the wider church become aware of a safeguarding concern?

There are occasions when the wider church become aware of a safeguarding concern, or where they may speculate about changes that have been made to the leadership of a group or the team timetable. Even when someone indicates that they may know something of what is going on, it is important not to share any information with them or confirm that the information they have is correct.

There may be occasions when it is necessary to say something to the wider church, but the examples below demonstrate the limitations placed around such a situation:

| Situation  | Justification for sharing   | Information to be shared   |
|--|---|--|
| <b>A youth leader has been suspended amid allegations of an inappropriate relationship with someone in the youth group.</b>  | There is speculation about why the youth leader is not working and rumours about what has happened.<br>To allow opportunities for other young people to come forward and share concerns.                | That there has been a safeguarding concern relating to the youth group and that it is being managed in line with safeguarding policy and procedures. If anyone has any specific concerns they should speak to the DPS. |
| <b>An adult member of the church has been charged with sexual offences against children. They teach outside of the church and as a result there is considerable media coverage of the trial.</b> | To reassure people within the church that there are safeguards in place relating to the individual concerned that govern their involvement in church life.  | That the leadership are aware of the situation regarding a named individual within the church and that the church is acting in accordance to their safeguarding policy and procedures.                                 |
| <b>An older member of the church was very distressed during the service the previous week and starts to make allegations of mistreatment against their carers.</b>                               | The distress was very public and people who were there had been upset by what they had seen and heard.<br>People in the church are asking questions about what the church is doing about the situation. | Reassurances that the church are supporting the person in question and that the safeguarding policy and procedures are being followed.   |

There will be occasions when church members ask for more detail about situations. It is important that the information shared is limited to assurances that the church is following the safeguarding policy and procedures and, where appropriate, that it is working with the statutory authorities, the Regional Baptist Association and National Safeguarding Team.

## **What if the individuals involved start to share information more widely?**

It can be frustrating when an alleged perpetrator decides to share a version of the story that does not match the information you have, or what the police have shared with you. You may feel that the leadership team should take action to correct information that is untrue, or to stress the seriousness of an allegation. However, you need to take advice before disclosing anything beyond the assurances described in the previous section.

### **Statutory bodies**

If you are working with Social Services, the LADO or Police **it is important to get their consent** before sharing **any** information about a situation that you are dealing with. In most cases, where there is an on-going police investigation or court case you will be severely restricted with what you can say. You must always follow any direction about sharing information that is given to you by one of these organisations.

### **Press statements**

If you think that a safeguarding situation may result in press attention for your church, please contact Mike Lowe, Communications Manager, at [mlowe@baptist.org.uk](mailto:mlowe@baptist.org.uk). He can help you to write and shape clear press statements for both proactive and reactive situations and can also advise on situations where the media may approach you or your church members directly.

Where there is press interest, we would recommend that just one or two people in your leadership team act as the contact points for the press. Usually these individuals would give members of the press a copy of the pre-prepared statement – we would not encourage church leaders to be drawn into radio or television interviews without professional support.

**If you are unsure about what information you can share with the wider church, then please contact your Regional Association Safeguarding Lead for further advice and support.**

## Safeguarding risk assessment and management plan

|  |
|--|
| <b>Name and contact details of the subject</b>   |
|  |
| <b>Name of church or church group the person attends or is seeking to join</b>                 |
|  |
| <b>Any current roles or responsibilities held by that person in the church or church group</b> |
|  |
| <b>Summary of safeguarding allegations or offences</b>   |
|  |

|   |
|---|
| <b>Key contacts at statutory authorities (police, social services, probation officer)</b> |
|   |
| <b>Any recommendations or instructions about risk from statutory authorities</b>          |
|   |

**Section 2 – Risks to victim(s)**

| <b>Risks of harm posed to victim(s) in relation to church or church group involvement</b> |  |                                       |                       |                                      |                |
|---|--|---------------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------|
| Description of risk   | Likelihood of harm<br>(High /Medium/Low) | Severity of harm<br>(High/Medium/Low) | Overall Risk<br>Level | Actions required to minimise<br>risk | Responsibility |
|   |  |                                       |                       |                                      |                |
|   |  |                                       |                       |                                      |                |
|   |  |                                       |                       |                                      |                |

**Section 3 – Risks to others**

| <b>Risks of harm posed to other children or adults at risk in relation to church or church group involvement</b> |  |                                       |                       |                                      |                |
|--|--|---------------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------|
| Description of risk  | Likelihood of harm<br>(High /Medium/Low) | Severity of harm<br>(High/Medium/Low) | Overall Risk<br>Level | Actions required to minimise<br>risk | Responsibility |
|  |  |                                       |                       |                                      |                |
|  |  |                                       |                       |                                      |                |
|  |  |                                       |                       |                                      |                |

**Section 4 – Key people - Names and contact details of the key people involved in implementing the risk management plan**

| Name | Contact details | Responsibilities |
|------|-----------------|------------------|
|      |                 |                  |
|      |                 |                  |
|      |                 |                  |

**Section 5 – Monitoring and management**

- a) Who is responsible for the overall management of this plan?
- b) How regularly will this plan be reviewed? (at least every six months)
- c) What information should be shared with the victim(s) or survivors?
- d) Copies of this plan will be provided to:

**Section 6**

This risk review was carried out by: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed by reviewer: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



## SUPPORTING VICTIMS AND SURVIVORS OF ABUSE (EXTRACT FROM THE BUGB GUIDE TO SUPPORTING THOSE WHO HAVE EXPERIENCED ABUSE)

The church's role in responding to those who have experienced abuse is in supporting the individual to express what they want to happen. This is not always easy or simple and the needs of the individual may change over time. Revd Dr Marie Fortune has identified seven essential elements to the process of recovery for those who have experienced abuse.

The **opportunity to tell the story** (to name the sin and share their experience)

For **someone to 'hear'** the story (that is, to believe and acknowledge the harm done and the fact that the victim is not to blame)

Receiving a **compassionate response** to the victim (that is, to 'suffer with', to walk with the person rather than try to 'problem solve')

An **effort to protect the vulnerable** from further harm (both the victim and others who might be at risk)

The community **holding the perpetrator to account**

An act of **restitution** in as far as this is possible (though this does not necessarily include institutional or financial liability)

Unambiguous **vindication**

It is important for the church to establish a culture and environment where people are able to express any fears, anxieties and concerns they have without the fear of ridicule, rejection or any retribution. Relationships should be developed where people can communicate about harm or abuse they have experienced.

Once someone has disclosed about abuse they have experienced, they are likely to feel nervous and fearful. They may also feel some relief that at last some things are now out in the open. They should continue to receive support and the opportunities to be able to disclose at their own pace any harm or abuse which they have experienced. They may need to revisit their story time and again, sometimes adding more details in the retelling.

Communicate with them in ways that take account of the stress and distress they may be experiencing. However, if their behaviour and condition give cause for concern, immediately seek advice from the appropriate people and organisations.

It should never just be assumed that someone who has experienced sexual abuse must receive counselling or therapy. Allow them to decide what response is best for them and support them in their choices. If necessary signpost them to available professional counselling or therapy and perhaps aid them in the logistics of receiving that help.

### **Historical abuse**

If someone discloses to you about abuse they experienced in the past, please follow the procedures set out in our template safeguarding policy and procedures for churches for disclosures of abuse by adults at risk. They should be treated in the same way as someone who has more recently experienced abuse. Just because the abuse took place a long time ago doesn't mean that it no longer has significant and continuing consequences in their life.

### **Self-awareness**

It is important that the listener has a good level of self-awareness, with an understanding that their own background, experiences and beliefs may have an impact on their listening. It may also be necessary to understand how the power balance between the person who has experienced abuse and the listener, and how that authority and influence, perceived or real, can impact on the supporting relationship.

There should be an awareness of any conflicts or dilemmas that may arise, either personally or within the church community. This is particularly relevant if the person who has abused is known in the church.

Do not be afraid to identify any areas where you feel you or others need further support or training. It is important to recognise the limits to your knowledge, experience and expertise.

### **Confidentiality**

Any records of the abuse should be written with accuracy, clarity, relevance and an appropriate level of detail. They should avoid opinions and hearsay, and they should be kept confidential.

The person who has experienced the abuse should be in control of who is told about what has happened. Their right to privacy and confidentiality should be respected unless someone else is at risk of harm. If details of the abuse need to be passed on, make sure that the individual understands the actions you take, and the reasons for them.

### **External support**

Make sure that information and contact details for local facilities and services specialising in support for those who have experienced harm and abuse are available. It is advisable that you collect these organisation details and how to access them, before they are needed. Support information displayed in toilets can be a good way to enable someone to access details without feeling like they are drawing attention to themselves.

The church should be quick to work in partnership with other agencies and professionals as appropriate, to provide the best possible support for the individual. External support should always be sought in situations beyond your experience and expertise. There is no shame in admitting that you cannot singlehandedly support the person who has experienced abuse.

### **Boundaries**

You may feel that you would always want to be there to support and care for those who have experienced abuse. However, it is important that you do not allow yourself to be freely available to people 24 hours of the day, to avoid roles and boundaries becoming blurred. It will protect you and your wellbeing as well as that of the person who has experienced abuse.

It may help to have a clear description of the role of a listener, which sets out their responsibilities, limits and boundaries and who they are accountable to. This would help to prevent a listener becoming overburdened and would explain what listening support someone who has experienced abuse may expect.

### **Communication**

Be aware that the person's ability to recount their story will depend on age, culture, language and communication skills and disability. They may want to involve their preferred spoken language, the use of signs, pictures, writing, objects of reference, or technology. It is important that the person who has experienced abuse can communicate in a way that they find most comfortable.

### **Disabilities**

People with disabilities are more likely to experience abuse. If someone with a disability discloses abuse it is important that particular sensitivity and wisdom be shown. If there is any anxiety or doubt about how to respond to someone with a disability who has experienced abuse, please consult your Local Association Safeguarding Lead or a specialist service.

### **Children**

It is believed that around three-quarters of sexually abused children don't tell anyone about the abuse at the time, with many still not disclosing what happened to them until adulthood, if at all. However if a child shares that they are experiencing abuse or have experienced abuse in the past, they will need ongoing care and support, just as adults do.

Please see our Model Safeguarding Policy and Procedures for guidance on how to respond to any concerns or disclosures of abuse by children. The information in this guide is based on the assumption that Children's Social Care Services have been informed and involved and the child is in a place of safety.

Children will respond to their experiences of sexual abuse in different ways. This may depend on their age at the start of the abuse, how long it continued for and who carried out the abuse. Your reaction to this abuse may be one of shock, horror, disgust, and panic. However, it is important to try to remain calm. An adult's reactions to the disclosure of abuse, particularly with younger children, can have significant impacts on their recovery.

The secrecy and shame surrounding sexual abuse can significantly contribute to any long term damage and pain caused by the abuse itself. Therefore, listening and allowing the child to talk and acknowledge what has happened, are vital aspects of their pastoral care and support. You should be sensitive to the needs of the child and must take your cue from them as to when they want to talk. It is most likely to take place with the children's or youth worker or leader, who they know and trust. It is not appropriate to ask lots of question or to investigate what has gone on. If the child does divulge any further information then make sure it is passed on to your church's Designated Person for Safeguarding and Children's Social Care Services.

*It is important to remember that you don't have all the answers and you can't fix everything immediately.*

### **Supervision**

It is important that those giving pastoral care and support to those who have experienced abuse, should receive pastoral care and support themselves. This support for the listener to talk and offload in a confidential setting is called supervision. Supervision is helpful for you to be able to reflect on what has happened and the actions that have been taken, as you discuss how you are supporting the person who has experienced abuse. It can help you to gain a perspective in emotionally charged situations that you are not used to dealing with.

Caring for and supporting those who have experienced abuse can be emotionally draining, in particular listening to things which may evoke strong feelings such as anger and disgust. Supervision gives you the opportunity to consider your thoughts and feelings about the disclosed harm or abuse, and to look at you might best deal with them so that you, the listener, is looked after.

It is advised that churches have arrangements in place to ensure pastoral care and support is readily available for those who are supporting and listening to people who have experienced abuse.

## THE COMPLICATED SUBJECT OF FORGIVENESS

*At the suggestion of many previous delegates at our Level 3 courses, we have included below the section from the course that looks at safeguarding and forgiveness.*

*We recognise that this is a challenging topic for us all and hope that the notes below offer the chance for further prayer and reflection.*



### **Forgiveness: those who perpetrate abuse**

In the past the Christian church has used the language of “forgiveness” and “second chance” somewhat lightly and has effectively colluded with those who have used their positions of trust in the church to gain the opportunity to harm and abuse children and those who are vulnerable.

But if we don’t forgive, are we denying the Christian gospel? Are we calling into question the power of Jesus to transform a person’s heart? **No, we are not. But we need to understand that we may not be the best person to determine how likely a person is to re-offend in the future.**

Forgiveness always entails risk. Restoring a relationship with someone who has broken trust in the past comes with the risk that they will break that trust again in the future, with all the pain that that brings. Taking the risk of allowing those who have offended against children or adults at risk in the past to work with them again in the future is a risk that we do not have the right to take.

We do not have the right to take such risks when the cost of its failure will be borne by those who are vulnerable, who may already have been hurt, and for whom the potential cost is incalculable. The Bible commands us to protect those who are weak, vulnerable or unable to protect themselves, and when safeguarding concerns arise in church life this must always be our first priority.

At the very core of the personality of a person who abuses is the **ability to deceive both adults and children.**

There is no doubt that God can transform a person’s heart by the power of the Holy Spirit. However, we need to be careful that we don’t make assumptions about our own ability to discern when such a transformation is genuine and when it is not. There will be others who bear the cost of our mistake if we get it wrong.

Those who have abused in the past should be helped to find a place in the life of the Christian community which supports them on their journey towards wholeness. A place which enables them to recognise, accept, and live with the consequences of their past in the light of God’s forgiveness and acceptance, but without putting others at risk.

**Those who have abused should not be allowed into situations which give them the opportunity to abuse again, even when they show repentance.**

The Christian values of forgiveness and grace should not be used as a reason to justify allowing a person to enter, continue in or resume a role in church life which a person has compromised by inappropriate behaviour in the past, even though our instincts long for this to be the case. It is simply creating an opportunity for abuse to occur again. It doesn't matter how far in the past the previous incident occurred. The person needs to find a different place and role in the life of the church which will enable them and all those around them to thrive.

### **Forgiveness: caring for those who have experienced and survived abuse**

When we are working with the survivors of abuse and their families, we also need to be extremely careful with how we use the language of forgiveness. We can harm survivors and their families even more when we push them to forgive before they are ready before they have even had time to process some of the pain and anger that they feel towards the person or people who has committed the abuse.

It is possible to reach a place where forgiveness can be found, but it's a long and difficult journey to get there for all involved. Churches and Christian supporters should **never** pressure an abuse survivor or their family members to 'forgive' the perpetrator because it is their 'Christian duty' if they have not yet reached the point of being ready to do that.

Please read again the points from MOSAC (Mothers of Sexually Abused Children) which are part of the presentation slides.

If abuse has occurred, it is not appropriate to allow the perpetrator to become or remain part of the church family if the survivor of that abuse or their close family members are part of the church family. The right thing to do in that situation is for the perpetrator to find a different place to worship. Survivors of abuse should never be asked to accept their abuser as part of the church family.

To summarise, we need to be very careful when we talk about Christian forgiveness in the context of abuse.

As a church leader, you will need to model the sensitivity that you would hope for from others. And you may need to gently (or firmly if necessary) help others to understand why it's not as simple as they may think

## USEFUL CONTACTS AND RESOURCES

### BUGB SUPPORT

#### **Baptist Union Safeguarding team**

The national safeguarding team focus on policy and resource development, including the development of our training programmes for churches. They also deal with safeguarding casework involving accredited ministers.

Website: [www.baptist.org.uk/safeguarding](http://www.baptist.org.uk/safeguarding)

#### **Association Safeguarding Contacts**

Each of our regional Baptist associations has a safeguarding lead who is able to offer guidance to churches in adopting and implementing safeguarding policies and procedures, and who coordinate safeguarding training in their regional area. You can find their details by following this link.

[https://www.baptist.org.uk/Groups/220781/Safeguarding\\_Contacts.aspx](https://www.baptist.org.uk/Groups/220781/Safeguarding_Contacts.aspx)

### OTHER ORGANISATIONS

There are many external organisations who specialise in supporting different aspects of life for adults at risk. For further information and expert advice please use the contact information below. Organisations are listed in alphabetical order.

#### **Action on Elder Abuse**

A specialist organisation that focuses on the issue of abuse towards to elderly.

Helpline: 0808 808 8141

Website: [www.elderabuse.org.uk](http://www.elderabuse.org.uk)

#### **Royal National Institute for the Deaf**

A national voluntary organisation that provides information, training and awareness raising of deafness, hearing loss and tinnitus.

Helpline: 0808 808 0123

Website: <https://rnid.org.uk/>

#### **Africans Unite Against Child Abuse (AFRUCA)**

AFRUCA promotes the welfare and rights of African children in the UK. It has published a series of booklets offering safeguarding advice addressed to the African community.

Telephone: 020 7704 2261

Website: [www.afruca.org](http://www.afruca.org)

### **Age UK**

National organisation offering advice and information on all aspects of elderly life.

Telephone: 0800 678 1602

Website: [www.ageuk.org.uk](http://www.ageuk.org.uk)

### **Alzheimer's Society**

Provides information, support and guidance on Alzheimer's and other forms of dementia.

Telephone: 0300 222 1122

Website: [www.alzheimers.org.uk](http://www.alzheimers.org.uk)

### **Bullying UK**

Bullying UK is part of Family Lives, a charity supporting and helping people with issues that are a part of family life.

Telephone: 0808 800 2222

Website: [www.bullying.co.uk/cyberbullying](http://www.bullying.co.uk/cyberbullying)

### **Safe Lives – Ending Domestic Abuse**

A national organisation providing practical help and support for professionals and organisations working with domestic abuse survivors.

Telephone: 0117 4033220

Website: [www.safelives.org.uk](http://www.safelives.org.uk)

### **The Cybersmile Foundation**

A non-profit organisation trying to combat cyber abuse.

Website: [www.cybersmile.org](http://www.cybersmile.org)

### **Circles UK**

Circles UK works to create Circles of Support and Accountability in which sex offenders are enabled to reintegrate responsibly into the community, working in partnership with criminal justice agencies.

Telephone: 0118 950 0068

Website: [www.circles-uk.org.uk](http://www.circles-uk.org.uk)

### **Churches Ministerial Counselling Service**

Churches' Ministerial Counselling Service (CMCS) is a network of professional counsellors operating in England, Scotland and Wales offering subsidised support to ministers and their households.

Website: [www.cmincs.net](http://www.cmincs.net)



### **DDC – Due Diligence Checking Limited**

DDC supports organisations by providing disclosure and barring services, training and advice. DDC deliver the DBS checking service for BUGB member churches. (BUGB pays for checks for Baptist churches so that checks for volunteers are free to our churches).

Telephone: 0845 644 3298

Website: [www.ddc.uk.net](http://www.ddc.uk.net)

### **Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS)**

DBS carries out criminal records checks on employees and volunteers working with children, young people and adults at risk.

Telephone: 0870 90 90 811

Website: [www.gov.uk/government/organisations/disclosure-and-barring-service](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/disclosure-and-barring-service)

### **FFLAG**

Offers support to the parents, families and friends of LGB people.

Telephone: 0845 652 0311

Website: [www.fflag.org.uk](http://www.fflag.org.uk)

### **Independent Age**

A charity that provides advice and support for older people, their families and professionals on community care and other issues.

Telephone: 0800 319 6789

Website: [www.independentage.org](http://www.independentage.org)

### **Kidscape**

Kidscape works to provide individuals and organisations with practical skills and resources to keep children safe from harm. The charity was established specifically to prevent bullying and child sexual abuse.

Parents helpline: 020 823 5430

Telephone: 020 7730 3300

Website: [www.kidscape.org.uk](http://www.kidscape.org.uk)

### **Livability**

Previously known as The Shaftesbury Society, it is a Christian charity working with disabled and disadvantaged people to help achieve social inclusion, empowerment and justice.

Telephone: 020 7452 2110

Website: [www.livability.org.uk](http://www.livability.org.uk)

### **MENCAP**

A national organisation that works in partnership with people with a learning disability, offering support, advice and advocacy services.

Telephone: 0808 808 1111

Website: [www.mencap.org.uk](http://www.mencap.org.uk)

### **MHA**

MHA provides care, accommodation and support services to older people throughout Britain.

Telephone: 01332 296200

Website: [www.mha.org.uk](http://www.mha.org.uk)

### **Mind**

Mental health charity offering advice and support for people in mental distress and their families.

Telephone: 0300 123 3393

Website: [www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk)

### **MindOut**

MindOut works to improve the mental health and wellbeing of LGBTQ communities and to make mental health a community concern.

Website: [www.mindout.org.uk](http://www.mindout.org.uk)

**National Domestic Violence Helpline:** 0808 2000 247

### **NSPCC**

A National Charity that provides help, advice and resources to promote safeguarding of children and young people.

Telephone: 0808 800 5000

Website: [www.nspcc.org.uk](http://www.nspcc.org.uk)

## **Police**

If anyone is believed to be at imminent risk of harm, then dial 999. The police non-emergency number is 101.

## **RNIB**

A national voluntary organisation focusing on the needs of blind and partially sighted people. RNIB offers help with advice, aids and equipment.

Telephone: 0303 123 9999

Website: [www.rnib.org.uk](http://www.rnib.org.uk)

## **The Relatives and Residents Association**

Gives advice and support to older people in care homes and their relatives and friends.

Telephone: 020 7359 8136

Website: [www.relres.org](http://www.relres.org)

## **Respond**

Support and help for victims of abuse who have learning difficulties, and their families.

Telephone: 020 7383 0700

Website: [www.respond.org.uk](http://www.respond.org.uk)

## **Restored**

Restored are a Christian charity who provide resources for churches focussed on ending violence against women.

Telephone 02039063922

Website: [www.restoredrelationships.org/](http://www.restoredrelationships.org/)

## **Samaritans**

The service provides emotional support for people who are experiencing feelings of distress or despair, including those which may lead to suicide.

Telephone: 116 123 (available 24 hours a day)

Website: [www.samaritans.org](http://www.samaritans.org)

## **Scope**

A national charity that provides support, information and advice to people with disabilities and their families.

Telephone: 0808 800 3333  
Email: [helpline@scope.org.uk](mailto:helpline@scope.org.uk)  
Website: [www.scope.org.uk](http://www.scope.org.uk)

## **selfharmUK**

An online organisation that offers information, advice, support and training on the subject of self-harm. It is primarily focused on self-harming young people and those who work with them.

Email: [info@selfharm.co.uk](mailto:info@selfharm.co.uk)  
Website: [www.selfharm.co.uk](http://www.selfharm.co.uk)

## **Survivors UK**

Support for survivors of male rape or sexual abuse.

Email: [info@survivorsuk.org](mailto:info@survivorsuk.org)  
Website: [www.survivorsuk.org](http://www.survivorsuk.org)

## **Think U Know**

Resources and all the latest information about new technologies and sites children and young people are visiting.

Website: [www.thinkuknow.co.uk](http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk)

## **Thirtyone:eight**

Thirtyone:eight is an independent Christian Safeguarding charity which offers training and resources for churches for all safeguarding issues and disclosures. They were previously called CCPAS.

Telephone: 0303 003 1111  
Website: [www.thirtyoneeight.org](http://www.thirtyoneeight.org)

## **Through The Roof**

A Christian body to equip and train churches to make the church and its life fully inclusive of people with disabilities.

Telephone: 01372 749955  
Website: [www.throughtheroof.org](http://www.throughtheroof.org)

### **Torch Trust**

Christian resources and activities for blind and partially sighted people.

Telephone: 01858 438260

Website: [www.torchtrust.org](http://www.torchtrust.org)

### **Trading Standards**

If someone has experienced a situation where they feel they have been charged excessive amounts of money for services provided or pressured into buying something they did not want by unscrupulous traders, Trading Standards may be able to help.

Website: [www.gov.uk/find-local-trading-standards-office](http://www.gov.uk/find-local-trading-standards-office)

### **Victim Support**

Victim Support is the independent charity for victims and witnesses of crime in England and Wales.

Support line: 0808 16 89 111

Website: [www.victimsupport.org.uk](http://www.victimsupport.org.uk)

### **Women's Aid**

A national charity working to end domestic violence against women and children. Supports a network of over 500 domestic and sexual violence services across the UK.

Website: [www.womensaid.org.uk](http://www.womensaid.org.uk)

### **Young Minds**

Support and resources for young people facing challenges with their mental health

Parents Helpline 08088025844

Website <https://youngminds.org.uk>



Safeguarding Team, Baptist Union of Great Britain, Baptist House, PO Box 44, 129  
Broadway, Didcot OX11 8RT  
Tel: 01235 517700 Email: [safeguarding@baptist.org.uk](mailto:safeguarding@baptist.org.uk) Website: [www.baptist.org.uk](http://www.baptist.org.uk)  
BUGB operates as a CIO with registered charity number 1181392

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